

Virginia Disaster Relief Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Virginia Disaster Relief Fund?

- It is a state-managed relief fund established by Gov. Bob McDonnell to financially help Virginia residents who were impacted by April 2011 severe weather and tornadoes.
- Donations to the fund are accepted from individuals, companies, nonprofit organizations and faith-based groups. A state contribution of \$600,000 in unspent general funds has been authorized by the governor.
- Together the state contribution and all donated money go toward the Virginia Disaster Relief Fund.

How does the program work?

- Proceeds of program will be distributed as grants to charities and faith-based organizations associated with the Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. Grants also can be made to Local Disaster Recovery Groups that are operating in several Virginia counties recovering from tornadoes.
- Groups can request assistance for specific cases in order to accomplish projects that will help individuals recover from the April tornadoes.
- Groups that receive grants must use case management to determine and respond to victims' needs.

How can program grants be used?

- Grants will be made to charities, faith-based organizations and local recovery groups so that those groups can aid individuals and families who were affected by severe weather and tornadoes during April.
- Grants can be used for these types of projects:
 - Repair or rebuilding of uninsured/underinsured and uninhabitable owner occupied dwellings
 - Assistance for renters in establishing a new rental residence
 - Assistance with temporary living expenses while residence is being repaired or new rental residence identified;
 - Assistance with transportation need when a victim's only vehicle was severely damaged or destroyed
 - Assistance for homeowners in replacing household items essential for habitation
- Virginia Disaster Relief Fund funds are not intended for medical expenses.

Why is the program set up to work with organizations and not individuals?

- Individuals and families will benefit. Charitable groups and local governments will be able to identify specific needs by working with individuals and families and can then request grants to meet those needs.
- Individuals and families can approach their local emergency manager or charitable group to request assistance through this program.
- Working through charitable groups and local governments builds accountability into the program.
- The organizations will involve volunteers, increasing the good that the donated funds can accomplish.

Who is administering the Virginia Disaster Relief Fund?

- Gov. McDonnell asked the state coordinator of emergency management (Michael Cline of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management) to establish a Management Committee to oversee the program.
- Members of the committee are VDEM's volunteers and donations coordinator; VDEM's individual assistance program manager; a representative of Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster; a representative of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and a representative of the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- The committee will consider each application on a case by case basis. The committee will determine dollar amounts of award.
- The committee is responsible for properly managing and distributing state and donated funds.

Why is this program necessary?

- FEMA denied Virginia's request for federal disaster assistance May 7. Additional state funding and private donations are needed to help Virginians affected April's severe weather and tornadoes.
- This program provides a way for people and private companies to make monetary donations to help those affected by the tornadoes.
- Recovery will take a long time, and everyone can help.

If You Want to Help ...

- A website has been created to process credit card donations for the Virginia Virginia Disaster Relief Fund at <http://disasterrelief.vi.virginia.gov/>
- Those who wish to write a check can do so by making checks payable to the Treasurer of Virginia with "tornado relief" noted in the memo line. Send checks to Comptroller's Office, P.O. Box 1971, Richmond, VA 23218-1971.
- Donations are tax deductible.

If You Need Help ...

- Virginia residents with unmet needs should call their local emergency management office. An alphabetical directory is available at <http://www.vaemergency.com/library/directories/index.cfm>
- Gloucester, Pulaski and Washington counties have Long Term Recovery Groups in place to help guide the recovery process in each locality.
 - Location specific information:
 - Gloucester County residents who need help: (804) 693-1390
 - Pulaski County residents who need help: (540) 994-2602
 - Washington County residents who need help: (276) 525-1335, 1336 and 1337

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